1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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Silwa

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SOCIALIZATION IN SILWA

159 Girls' dreams reveal the images of being in danger of drowning in the canal, black jinns with frightening eyes following them, men beating them, and so on.[1]

776 Children also show fear of certain places believed to be inhabited by evil spirits, for example, deserted or ruined houses, deserted wells, spots where a murder was committed, some certain areas round the cemetery, a spot where a train ran down a person or an animal. It is believed by children and many adults that the person who meets a violent end will [775] reappear as a violent ghost—'sul' or 'marid'—haunting people at night and causing them harm by frightening them with its fiery eyes. A boy of twelve told me of this horrified feeling, when on an errand at night the 'sul' followed him, throwing stones at him, but it disappeared suddenly when the boy passed by a gathering of people on his way, as the 'sul' only appears to a person walking alone at night. Children are also warned against talking to or looking at their shadows, especially on moonlit nights, [822 828] as this might lead them to insanity. The girls are warned against looking too much at their shadows at night or at their reflection in the mirror for fear of the same malady. To avoid evil spirits, however, children are told to recite the 'Fatiha' or any part of the Koran on passing near the haunted places. Charms are also held to protect children from such dangers.

154 In discussing these sources and manifestations of fear, especially those connected with the supernatural world, one cannot ignore the psychoanalytical interpretation which considers spirits and demons as projections of repressed aggressive tendencies against beloved persons. The writer is inclined to explain children's fears and their genuine belief in the existence of ogresses and bogies in the village as a projection of repressed hostile attitudes towards their parents or other members of the family.[2]

571 In this connection, one is tempted to ask the question: to what extent does the incentive of fear as a motive, so much emphasized in the village, affect the undercurrent trends of the social relationship between the villagers? The tension and suspicion discerned in the interpersonal relationships epitomized in the saying that 'every man has an enemy' could be related to the excess in resorting to both fear and rivalry motives in 773 the bringing up of children. The favourite legendary figure of 'Jiha' is liked by both children and adults, because of his trickery and cunning that always enables him to take revenge.[3] It could also be suggested that 154 this anxiety and fear through which children are stimulated is partially responsible for the adult defence mechanism of projection.

[1] See Appendix XI.

[2] S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, pp. 87, 140.

For a reference to the striking feelings of ambivalence of children towards their parents in primitive society, see M. Fortes, 'Parenthood in Primitive Society', where he says that as the parents in primitive societies are responsible for the passing on of cultural traditions, relations of children towards their parents tend to be ambivalent. There is commonly a feeling of hostility underlying the affection and gratitude of children felt towards their parents. *Man*, May 1952, p. 65.

[3] See Chapter VIII.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Childlessness is a real

terror to them, and the more children they have the happier they are. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill effects of the evil eye, or eye of envy.[1]

A woman's *ḳarīneh* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarīn* or *ḳarīneh* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarīneh*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's double. Indeed, the mother herself during her pregnancy must also be protected, for her *ḳarīneh*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarīneh* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarīneh*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.*, the human child's double) died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarīneh* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a sheikh, and will ask him to write a protection for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the queen of the *aḳrān* with King David. For it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth.

So he asked her, "What is your work?"

She answered, "If a woman is pregnant I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may perchance come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die."

Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her.

So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm."

So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore if a pregnant woman thinks that she has cause to fear that her *ḳarīneh* will do her an injury she will apply for a charm (*ḥigāb*) and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to

[1] See Chapter XIII.

FERTILITY RITES

solemnly stepped over them backward and forward seven times. Four charms in all were used, representing the head of Isis, a mummified divinity, a scarab, and a cat (Fig. 44). When this was accomplished the lower jaw-bone of an ancient Egyptian skull was placed on the ground. The same ceremony was yet again performed, being repeated with two complete ancient Egyptian heads, one a well-preserved mummified head, the other a skull. A glass of water was then brought, into which the blue glazed charms were dropped. Each woman drank some of the water, and then picked out the charms and sucked them, and some rubbed their bodies with these magical objects, and also applied the water to their persons.

It may interest my readers to know that on my return to Egypt the following year one of the first items of news communicated to me by my servant was that at least two of the women who had had resort to my charms would shortly bear children.

Great efficacy is attached to the Pyramids, and childless women will repair to one of them and walk round it seven times, believing that this perambulation will assist them to become mothers. Women sometimes beg to be allowed to remove small portions of the decorated walls in ancient tomb-chapels to assure their bearing children. It appears that ancient things in Egypt are credited with great potency in this respect, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any reliable information from the people themselves as to why they attach such magical power to antiquities. The stepping over the tomb-shaft suggests a belief in reincarnation, and this belief does exist among the peasants, as will be seen later on; but there is also the idea that *barakeh* is attached to anything that is old, or sacred, or even peculiar. The word *barakeh* means blessing, and *barūkeh* is a lucky coin, a thing to bring good luck.

Women who have no children will sometimes visit a sheikh's tomb, entreating him to intervene on their behalf, and vowing to make some gift in return if their wish is granted. A cord or cords are often to be seen hanging across the inside of such a building, and from it are suspended a variety of objects, including coloured handkerchiefs. These are, in many cases, the votive offerings of women, which they have hung up in the tomb when their prayers for offspring have been answered.

Lane[1] records the practice of visiting tombs or mosques to obtain

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 300 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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782 a blessing, or to urge some special petition, such as the gift of children. He states that the suppliants believe that a more favourable reception to their prayers will be granted if offered up in such sacred places.

842 *Barakeh* is also occasionally believed to be possessed by, or attached to, living people. Over and over again women have come up to touch me because they believed I had this virtue. Among the numbers of women who in 1926 came to me to step over the blue glazed charms which I always take about with me was a young married woman who was in a state almost verging on madness because she had no children. Five years ago she had given birth to a child which survived only a few hours. Since then she had had no hope of becoming a mother. She was in a desperate plight, and her fears were increased because she suspected that her husband would shortly divorce her as there seemed to be no prospect of a family. She begged and entreated me to help her, so I suggested the charms, over which she stepped seven times. She came a second and a third time, becoming more and more frantic as time went on.

The last time she visited me she said, "O gracious lady, I know you *can* help me if you will; we all know you have so much *barakeh*!" She then seized my hand, pressing it against her, and saying, "You *can* give me *barakeh* if you will!"

I expressed my sorrow for and sympathy with her, and she took her departure. Not long after I heard from one of her fellow-villagers that her wish was at last realized, and that she had hopes of becoming a mother. It was all put down to me, and she called it *my* child! Many people after this came to me from her village for the same purpose, and all, so I heard, met with the same success. The population of that village should be appreciably increased through my supposed *barakeh*!

842 It is a popular belief in Egypt that if a dead child is tightly bound in its shroud the mother cannot conceive again. Therefore the shroud and the cords binding it are always loosened just before burial, dust also being put in the child's lap. The dust is put there, so I was told, in order to keep the body lying on its back. The woman who gave me this information said that sometimes a body twists round when decomposition sets in, and if this happens the mother cannot have another child. If, in spite of precautions, the woman as time goes on seems to have no prospect of again becoming

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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a mother she will go to the tomb of her dead child, taking a friend with her, and request the man whose business it is to do so to open the tomb. The disconsolate mother then goes down inside the tomb where the body lies, and steps over it backward and forward sevén times, in the belief that the dead child's spirit will re-enter her body and be born. Here we see a definite belief in reincarnation.

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A very similar practice has been noticed among the Bangalas, a tribe to the north of the Congo. On one occasion a woman of this tribe was seen to be digging a hole in a public road. Her husband explained to a Belgian officer who was present that his wife wished to become a mother, and begged that she might be left unmolested, promising, on his part, to mend the road afterward. The woman continued to dig till she had unearthed the skeleton of her dead child, which she affectionately embraced, begging it at the same time to enter her body to be reborn.[1] In this case we see a very similar rite, accompanied by the same belief, as in modern Egypt.

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Among the Copts, if a child dies while it is a baby and after it has been baptized the body is enclosed in a coffin. However, the mother of the child instructs the men who take it to be buried in the graveyard (generally near a monastery) that they are to remove the body from the coffin and inter the latter only in the vault. The body of the child is then buried in the sand near the vault, and sand is placed under its armpits and its chin and on its thighs. This, the mother believes, will ensure her having another child. It seems as if the Copts have a belief similar to that of the Muslims mentioned above, and that the sand is used to keep the body from twisting and thereby preventing the mother from bearing another child.

Again, among the Copts, if a child dies before it is baptized it is placed naked in a *ḳādūs* (an earthenware jar, several of which are attached to water-wheels). This jar is buried under the floor of one of the rooms in the house, it does not matter which, and is covered again with the mud of which the floors are usually made in the houses of the *fellāḥīn*. This is believed to ensure the mother having another child.

Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her

[1] Quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, " Adonis, Attis, and Osiris," 3rd edition, vol. i, p. 92.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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764 ghost of the deceased away from the village. I am told that it is merely the way of making it known that a death has taken place.

When the corpse has been washed it is wrapped in cotton or silk cloths, the first wrapping being usually white, the outer green. [822] [192] Green is the sacred colour among Muslims, being associated with the Prophet Muḥammed. His descendants, or perhaps I should say those who lay claim to be such, very often wear a green turban.

[291] [152]

FIG. 50. WOMEN WAILING OUTSIDE AN ENGINE-HOUSE, WHERE A BOY HAD JUST BEEN KILLED

Note the uplifted arms of the dead boy's mother, in the centre, a characteristic attitude of grief. See below, p. 236, and Fig. 137.

The Muslims do not bury in coffins. The corpse, when wrapped, is laid on a bier with low sides, and this is covered with a shawl by way of a pall. The sex of the deceased is indicated by slight differences in the draping of the shawl.

764 When a man or a woman dies a ram must be killed and some of its blood sprinkled on the place where the death occurred. If this is not done the *rōḥ* (soul) will remain in the house and cannot go to heaven. If the people are too poor to afford a ram a kid is killed instead. When the father of a rich man whom I know died a ram and some other animals were killed at the house, and, [831] in addition, a camel was slaughtered near his grave and the meat distributed among the poor

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

The clothes which the man or woman wore when he or she died must be washed, and then a *fiḳīh* comes and recites passages from the Ḳorān, having the clothes close to him and one of his hands resting on them. He also recites over the place where the person died. If these precautions are not taken the *rōḥ* of the dead person cannot leave the house. When a child dies a hen is killed instead of an animal, the rest of the procedure being the same as on the occasion of the death of an older person.

I have given this information as it was repeated to me, but I

FIG. 51. STRING OF WAILING WOMEN IN A FUNERAL PROCESSION

fancy that it is really the *ʿafrīt* of the dead person that is meant in this statement, not the *rōḥ*, which is the soul, the *ʿafrīt* being the ghost, and quite separate from the *rōḥ*, according to the popular belief.[1]

The corpse is borne to the grave by four male bearers, who are constantly changed during the procession to the cemetery, for to assist in thus carrying the dead is considered a pious act, and he who performs it thereby acquires considerable merit. The funeral procession is headed by men, those who are relations walking as near as possible to the bier. Immediately behind the bier walk the female mourners (Fig. 51), their faces, hands, and arms dyed blue, and their heads, breasts, and arms plastered with mud; they hold handkerchiefs, usually blue or black, and sometimes green, which they wave in the air as they give vent to their piercing

[1] See below, pp. 237 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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the bier from the ground, and the procession is continued to the grave. As they proceed the men chant the profession of faith: "There is no God but God, and Muḥammed is the Apostle of God. The blessing of God upon him and peace, a thousand blessings upon Muḥammed." These words are repeated over and over again till the graveside is reached.

It is believed that the dead, while being carried to the grave, can make their bearers walk fast or slowly. If the bearers are made to go quickly it is said to mean that the deceased is a good man or woman, who wishes to go as fast as possible to the tomb, and does not fear the visit of the two angels Nākir and Nekīr, who are believed to come to the tomb on the first night after burial to examine the deceased as to the life he spent on earth and to question him as to his religion.

When the bearers suddenly feel themselves being dragged back, or even unable to move at all, it is believed to be that the deceased does not like the spot chosen for the grave.

During a funeral procession in a village well known to me the bearers were not able to advance a step, owing to the dead man objecting to the locality of his grave; however, as it had already been dug, and the bearers were not willing to pander to any such whim, they carried the bier round and round in a circle, thus making the dead man so giddy that he lost his power over his bearers and did not realize where they were conveying him! They were thus able to rush him into his grave without more ado!

On another occasion, in the road running past my house, I saw the bearers being dragged back by constant jerks. The reason given was that the dead woman who was being carried to her grave was upset that her son, a very young boy, was not in the procession. Some one, therefore, had to fetch him, and then the *cortège* proceeded on its way without further interruption.

There appears to be a belief, at any rate among some of the peasants, that a man's shadow is a separate entity. It walks with him through life, dies with him at his death, and then enters with him into his tomb. When discussing this point with some of the people I gathered that no one knew what became of it afterward. I was told that there is no belief, such as is found in some parts of the world, that a man may be injured by some one stepping on his shadow.

On returning to the house of the deceased the men seat them-

DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

either round and somewhat flat or ring-shaped. A number of very poor people and *fuḳahā* follow the mourners to the cemetery. The bread is given away to the poor in the name of the dead, and the *fuḳahā* also receive their share in return for recitations from the Ḳorān at the graveside. These men may receive small sums of money for their services in addition to the gifts of bread. The visit is repeated on the fifteenth and fortieth days after the death (see also pp. 117 ff.)

It is customary to engage two or three *fuḳahā* to give recitations regularly two or three times a year in a house where a death has taken place, to ensure the welfare of the deceased. Some people arrange for even more frequent recitations.

I will now briefly describe the various kinds of graves I have seen. The structure varies according to the nature of the ground in which the cemetery is situated. In some parts of Egypt the dead are buried along the lower desert. In this case the grave is not usually prepared beforehand, but a number of men, carrying the necessary implements for digging, accompany the funeral procession. When they arrive at the selected spot the bier on which the body lies is placed on the ground, and a shawl is fixed on sticks stuck into the ground to act as a temporary wind-screen. The diggers then set to work, and, after removing the covering of sand, dig a rectangular pit in the underlying limestone rock, oriented east and west. On the south side of the pit[1] a recess is cut, large enough to admit the corpse, which is lifted into its last resting-place by some of the men present, and with its head toward the west—*i.e.*, looking east toward Mecca. The recess is then bricked over in such a way that a chamber is formed of sufficient size to admit of the deceased sitting up in it. This is necessary on account of the belief that when the two examining angels visit the grave on the first night after burial the dead must be able to sit up while they question him. For this reason also the cords or tapes which are bound round the wrappings of the dead must be unfastened as soon as the body is laid in the grave. When the recess has been bricked over the pit is filled up and the sand piled in a mound over it, palm-branches being stuck into the sand to surmount the whole.

Sometimes instead of the mound of sand a brick superstructure such as is described below is erected above the grave. The above-

[1] So in the case of two interments that I have witnessed.

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

mentioned palm-branches, which are often carried in the funeral processions, are placed over the graves (see Fig. 53) because they are believed to bring a blessing to the dead. For the same reason plants of *ṣabr* (aloes) are often planted, either in earthenware pots or in the ground itself, close to the mound.

Sometimes these rock-hewn burial-places are of a more elaborate design. Instead of the pit giving direct access to the burial-chamber there may be an intervening passage, the outer end of which, not the immediate entrance to the chamber, is bricked up before the pit is filled with sand and the excavated *débris*.

If the cemetery does not lie in the lower desert, but in, or on the edge of, the cultivation, the graves are somewhat differently constructed. A large chamber is excavated underground and surmounted by a flat-topped or vaulted superstructure, which varies considerably according to the taste or wealth of the owner of the tomb. The chamber constitutes a family vault, and most of the members of one family are buried in it, the sexes being usually divided, the men lying together apart from the women. This is the general rule, but I have been told that it is not always strictly adhered to by the *fellāḥīn*. Above the ground, at one end of the superstructure, is a recess, which indicates where the opening to the grave is situated underground. Palm-branches are placed in front of this recess, and plants of *ṣabr* are often planted on either side of it. At this spot, too, the relatives and friends assemble and sit down during the periodical visits to the graves discussed on pp. 117 ff. and 263 ff.

That the dead should appear to their relations and fellow-villagers soon after death is looked upon as a matter of course and an event of common occurrence. I have heard of many such appearances, which are much welcomed by, and are a great comfort to, the mourners. The following account of an after-death appearance which led to the detection of crime was given me by an old friend, who swore that it was quite true.

Two years before the story was told to me a man in one of the provinces in Middle Egypt married a woman of questionable character. After the marriage he found out that she was unfaithful to him, so one day, accompanied by a friend, he took her out for a walk. She wanted to go one way, but they insisted on her going the way they chose. They went on till they arrived at a newly dug well, into which they threw her and then filled up the

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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pit. Shortly after this she appeared first to her brother, then to her mother, and then again to her brother, to whom she related the circumstances of her death and the exact spot where they would find the filled-in well at the bottom of which her body lay. The brother reported this to the proper officials, who went to the spot, had the well excavated, and found the woman's body at the bottom, just as she had told her mother and brother. The husband and the friend who had assisted him in the murder were convicted on this evidence, and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One day a week—in some parts of Egypt on Thursday, in others on Friday—the villagers pay a visit to the graves of their relations and friends. The ceremony is called *eṭ-Ṭala'*, meaning the coming forth or the going up. Many of the cemeteries are situated in the lower desert, and this name may have been given because the people always speak of 'going up' to and 'descending' from the desert. On the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'* the souls of the dead are believed to return to their graves, and they expect their relatives to meet them there. I have often taken part in these ceremonies, and the following description of one of my visits shows what the proceedings are on such occasions.

The cemetery where the events described took place is situated in the lower desert, and it runs parallel to an ancient burial site lying rather nearer the upper-desert slope. It is a sand- and wind-swept place, and the palm-branches stuck into the mounds above the graves quickly wither and assume the pale tawny colour of the surrounding desert. But from the high-desert slope above, where I was camping with my brother, the shadows cast by these branches are so dark that they give the impression of black-clad figures kneeling in perpetual grief, keeping silent watch by each grave. From the camp I could see the people on their way to visit the graves, and also much that was going on in the cemetery itself. Early in the morning processions of women, often accompanied by their male relatives, were to be seen wending their way from the neighbouring villages toward this desert graveyard. Some were walking, some, mostly men, were riding on donkeys. As soon as the sound of the still distant wailing reached our camp I would mount my donkey and start off to meet the mourners in the cemetery. A number of *fuḳahā* were always present on these occasions, as it was their business to recite various passages from the Ḳorān by the gravesides, for which purpose they are hired by the visitors.

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Some of the women brought with them large baskets full of bread-rings, and with these they rewarded the *fuḳahā* for their recitations, which are believed to be of great benefit to the dead. The bread used on these occasions is in this part of Egypt nearly always made in the ring shape, and sweets of all kinds, cakes, etc., are also brought for distribution, especially by the richer people. There was usually a certain number of the very poorest people present, as well as children, who had come in the hope of receiving a share in the gifts. One of these suppliants might say, "*Iddīnī*

FIG. 53. WOMEN CROUCHING OVER A GRAVE

ḥaseneh, yā sitt" ("Give me *ḥaseneh*, O lady"). The word *ḥaseneh* means charity, and is a general term for the bread, etc., given away on these occasions; the bread, as I have mentioned above, being called *kaḥk*.

On presenting bread to the *fuḳahā* or to the poor the giver will say, "*Khud kaḥk ʿala rōḥ el-fulān*" ("Take a cake on behalf of the soul of so and so"), mentioning the name of the dead relation. It is quite a moving sight to see the faces of the women contorted with grief, the tears streaming down their cheeks, as they crouch over the graves, swaying backward and forward (Fig. 53). They hold in their hands coloured handkerchiefs, generally of silk, used only on these occasions or at a funeral. Sometimes a large one, often black with a coloured border, is doubled cornerwise and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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placed round the neck of the mourner. With this she can vary her movements, taking hold of the handkerchief at either end and drawing it backward and forward, like a saw, while she sways rhythmically from side to side. It should be mentioned here that all these movements, including those of the *fuḳahā* when reciting, are strictly rhythmical.

With the smaller handkerchiefs with which the women wipe the tears from their cheeks they also pat and stroke the grave. On one occasion I saw a young woman acting in this manner just as if she were affectionately stroking a living person. She then knocked on

FIG. 54. DISTRIBUTION OF BREAD-RINGS AT THE GRAVESIDE

the grave as if to attract the attention of the dead man who lay below, crying, as she did so, "*Yā abūi, yā abūi!*" ("O my father, my father!"). Some of the apparently grief-stricken mourners were professional wailing women, and often as I passed them, in the midst of what sounded like heartbroken sobs, they would look up at me, smiling in a friendly way, only to resume their sorrowful attitude the moment I left them.

Those who can afford it often bring several large baskets of bread for distribution. I have seen six or seven such baskets piled up on a single grave, where a large party was assembled, a number of wailing women being seated at one end, while at the other was a group of men and boys. The men were *fuḳahā* who, swaying from side to side, were reciting passages from the Ḳorān, accompanied, as is very often the case, by the boys. When one set of recitations came to an end each performer had two or three bread-

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

rings doled out to him by a man and one or two women, who appeared to be the chief mourners.[1] Then the recitations began again, ending with a similar reward. All this time the women at the other end of the grave kept up their piteous cries, receiving in return exactly the same compensation as did the *fuḳahā* (Fig. 54).

Presently one of the women who had been assisting in the distribution of the bread-rings took up a basketful and, placing it on her head, started off, accompanied by another woman, to present the contents to the mourners at other graves. They perambulated most of the cemetery, giving bread-rings to women who had none. The acceptance of such a gift implies that the receiver is willing to be on friendly terms with the giver. Sometimes the donor meets with an angry refusal from the woman to whom she presents the bread. This implies that there have been quarrels between them. In such cases bystanders will intervene, urging the acceptance of the gift and the duty of living at peace with each other and making up the quarrel. These peacemakers are usually successful, and the gifts are finally accepted, though sometimes it requires considerable persuasion before a reconciliation is effected.

This weekly ceremony usually lasts from two to three hours, after which time the women take up their now empty baskets, the men who have donkeys mount them, and the whole procession returns to the villages, the women sometimes wailing as they go.

In another part of Egypt where I have attended this ceremony the cemetery does not lie in the desert, and the graves have large superstructures, with the recesses, or false doors, as described above.[2] On more than one occasion when I have visited a particular grave I have observed the widow of the man who is buried there squatting down close to the false door and addressing her dead husband thus: "*Nahārak sa'īd, yā Hideyb! Ēy-zēyak?*" and so on, these being the usual salutations on greeting a living person. They may be rendered, "Good day, O Hideyb! How are you?" This woman told me that she is happy to be able to go to her husband's grave on this day and meet him there, which shows how definite a belief it is that the dead return to their graves on the day of *eṭ-Ṭala'*. The care of the dead is a strongly marked feature of Egyptian life generally, for these ceremonies are performed largely for the benefit of the departed, to ensure them happiness in the life beyond.

[1] See *Discovery*, vol. ii, p. 211, Fig. 3.

[2] See p. 116.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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DEATH AND FUNERARY CEREMONIES

That the souls of the dead come to the cemeteries is again shown in the following belief. I have been told by two or three of my village friends that when the people go to visit the cemetery, and they see a number of small green birds near the graves, they believe that these birds are the souls of the dead who lie buried there. Lane[1] says that "Souls of martyrs (*shuhadā*) reside in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise and drink of its rivers." This is the belief as he heard it. It was definitely stated to me that the green birds *are* the souls of the dead.

There are certain taboos on mourners, two of which are the following. If a person, male or female, has attended a funeral and walked in the procession, or even only gone part of the way, he or she must not enter the house where a woman has a baby under seven days old, for this will cause the mother to have no milk. Such a person must inform the mother of the child that he desires to enter her house, and she must then go outside to meet the visitor, who can then come into it without any evil consequences.

Again, no such mourner must enter a house in which there is some one suffering from sore eyes, for in that case the sufferer will lose his or her sight. Such intending visitors must wait outside the house, and the man or woman who has sore eyes must come out and meet them there first, and then they can enter without danger.

The death and funeral rites of the Copts are in many respects very similar to those of the Muslims.

The following incidents were witnessed by me several years ago when I was staying in a small village in Fayûm Province, and this account of what I actually saw will best describe the ceremonies incident to the death and burial of a Copt. It must always be remembered that these are accounts of death and funeral rites as practised by the peasants only, and that they are not meant to be a description of the ceremonies which take place among educated people on similar occasions.

Early one morning a visitor brought to the house where I was staying the news of the death of a poor but much respected Copt who lived in an adjacent village. It was suggested that his relations and friends would much appreciate a visit from me, so I started off on my donkey as soon as possible after the sad tidings had reached me. It was not long before I arrived at the house of

[1] *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, p. 83.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt
Copts MR 10

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Scriptures. After interminable readings and chantings there was a pause, and one of the mourners present clapped his hands, thus commanding the attention of every one in the church. He then began the funeral oration, extolling the dead man and mentioning many of his good deeds. He spoke with great fervour and sincerity, though he was himself a Muslim, and I much admired his restrained gestures, his fluency, and his clear enunciation. He was really a good speaker and entirely devoid of self-consciousness. After the speech was ended the candles were put out and removed from the sides of the coffin, the lid was replaced, the bearers hoisted the coffin on to their shoulders, and, preceded by the priest and the *'arīf*, walked three times round the church, followed by all the mourners. After the third perambulation they came down the centre of the building, and so out of the church to the place of burial.

There is no service at the grave among the Copts, and after loud-voiced and conflicting advice from every man in the crowd assembled round the grave the coffin was at last successfully lowered to its final resting-place, a vault in which a number of interments had already been made. Finally the opening to the vault was bricked up and the earth flung back into its place again, and we all set off for our several abodes.

The mourning at the house usually lasts for seven days, as with the Muslims, though the period is sometimes reduced to three days only. During those seven or three days, according to one of my Coptic informants, no food is cooked in the house of mourning, but supplies are brought in by village friends. According to the same informant, prayers are offered up in the church by the priest on the third, seventh, fifteenth, and fortieth days after a death; these prayers are believed to be the means of saving a lost soul. During the fifteen days the house of mourning is not swept, but no reason was given for this custom.

On the third day after a death has taken place a priest, attended by the *'arīf*, goes to the house of the dead man or woman. Some of the uneducated Copts believe that the priest on this occasion dismisses the soul of the dead person from the house, where it is believed to remain until that day. I was present for this ceremony after the death of the Copt whose funeral I described above. As his relations were very poor people the ceremony was doubtless far less elaborate than it would be in the case of people in a better position.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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COPTS MR10

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in which the man had died. Every one was censed as he passed toward the room, and one of the men, who accompanied him, carried the basin of water. The priest censed this room and sprinkled the whole of it, together with the mattress on which the dead had lain, with the water. This terminated the ceremony, and the priest and his *ʿarīf* departed for the desert monastery.

There is a common belief among the Copts of the peasant class that this sprinkling of the water in the house drives away the soul of the person who has died. This use of the water together with the incense is probably in origin a purificatory rite, cleansing the house and the inhabitants from the contamination of death, though such a belief, at any rate among the peasants, does not appear to exist at the present day.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

SUPERSTITIONS

It is a common belief in Egypt, as, indeed, in some other countries also, that the soul can leave the body during sleep. It is therefore considered unsafe to wake anyone suddenly, for fear the soul should not have time to return to the body of the sleeper. Such awakening must be done very slowly, so as to give the soul ample time to return. I am not quite clear as to what happens if the soul does not get back in time; probably the sleeper's personality changes, or he becomes imbecile.

There is a strong belief among the peasants that the dead can appear to the living, speak with them, and issue commands. The strength of this belief can be seen in connexion with the sheikh cult, discussed in Chapter XV. There are a number of ghost stories current in the country, the ghost being usually regarded as the dead man's *'afrīt*, which, as will be seen in the following chapter, is not the soul, but a separate entity. The two following ghost stories may interest my readers, the second ghost having only just begun to 'walk' a week or so before I arrived at the dead man's village.

The engine which controls the machinery for irrigating the fields of the rich *'omdeh* (headman) of a certain village is worked by steam, and the boiler is covered with a large sheet of iron. The steam is shut off late every evening, at about seven-thirty, and is turned on again at daybreak. To turn it on a man has to stand on the sheet of iron above the reservoir. One day the son of the assistant engineer made a mistake, saying that he had turned on the steam when he had not done so. The consequence was that more was generated than the boiler could contain, and it promptly exploded. An unfortunate man who was standing on the iron sheet was crushed against the ceiling and killed instantly. One night later a man who was sleeping in the engine-room with some of his fellow-workmen began to call out. His companions were aroused from sleep by his cries, and asked him what was the matter. He told them that he had seen the man who had been killed, and that he was wailing and crying "*Akh! akh! akh!*" ("Alas! alas! alas!"), and also had tried to poke out his (the speaker's) eyes with two of his fingers. Since this incident a great explosion is heard in the engine-room every night at twelve o'clock. The first time it was heard the guards and other people thought that there had been another accident, but, when they went to look, nothing had occurred, and the engine was not working. The

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775 explosion is heard regularly every midnight, but no attention is 682 now paid to it, as everybody has got quite accustomed to it.

Very shortly before my visit to the village in which the above-mentioned events took place a man was murdered in the adjacent fields, and not long after my arrival the following incident occurred. A woman was walking from this village to another not a great distance off, carrying bread and eggs to two of her grandsons who were at school there. She was alone, and as she approached the spot where the murder had taken place she saw a man who seemed to be ill, and who kept on crying, "*Akh! akh! Yā abūi! Yā abūi!*" ("Alas! alas! O my father! O my father!"). She went up to him and caught hold of his hands, raised him up, and then walked on with him, trying to comfort him. But after walking a short distance with her the man suddenly disappeared. She thereupon was terrified, and wept with fear. A man who was on his way to the same village overtook her, and, seeing her distress, asked her what was the matter. She told him about the stranger whom she had found and had tried to comfort and who had so mysteriously vanished. The man told her not to be frightened, that it was nothing, and that the apparition had appeared to him in the same way. It is generally supposed that this mysterious weeping apparition is the ghost (or *'afrīt*) of the man who had been murdered.

ʿAFĀRĪT

years of age, who used to be a village guard. He told a friend of mine that he knew that the ground on which the *ʿomdeh's* engine now stands used to be the haunt of *ʿafārīt*, for, when doing patrols at night round the outskirts of the village, he had sometimes seen on that spot a plough pulled by oxen and driven by a man, or sometimes a threshing-machine with the oxen and their driver, all made of fire. As this guard approached them he would cross himself, whereupon the *ʿafārīt* who had assumed these forms would disappear.

If a woman fears that *ʿafārīt* are in her house she puts a *ḳulleh* of water on the floor of one of the rooms, and near it she places some bread and salt, leaving them in this position during the night. This protects the whole house, and effectually prevents any *ʿafārīt* from entering it.

Nightmare and sleepwalking are supposed to be caused by *ʿafārīt*, and if a child suffers from either of these complaints it is a sign that an *ʿafrīt* has entered its body. This may have happened because the child has done something wrong; perhaps, so it was suggested to me, it had plucked some of the ears of corn from a field belonging to a neighbour. If a Coptic child sleepwalks or has nightmare its parents call in a priest, who tells them to bring seven *ḳanādīl* (old-fashioned saucer-lamps, with floating wicks). The priest then asks for a jar of water, and prays seven special prayers, burning incense meanwhile in a censer. As he finishes one prayer he puts out one lamp, after a second prayer a second lamp, and so on, till all the prayers are said and all the lamps extinguished. He now tells the parents to place the jar of water on the roof of the house, where it must remain for one night. On the following morning the child is bathed in the water, after which, it is believed, he will be cured.

Among the Muslims if a child is affected in this way the parents go to a magician, who writes a charm of protection for the child to wear.

In addition to his soul (*rōḥ*) every human being is believed to possess an *ʿafrīt* which leaves his body at death. In certain circumstances it may be a menace to any person who comes near it. Animals also have an *ʿafrīt*. This belief especially attracted my attention recently. A little dog which had been badly injured took refuge in the bathroom of my house. My servant told me that he was sure it could not live, and that, before it died, he must

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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remove it, or its *'afrīt* would for ever haunt the house. As it was a hopeless case I gave my servant a revolver and told him to shoot the dog. This he did, but he first took it away to a more distant spot.

While I was in Egypt in 1925 a poor man who came to trade in the village in which I was staying was drowned. He had gone to the Baḥr el-Yūsuf canal to perform his ablutions before his morning prayers, but the water was deeper than he thought, and he was unable to swim. No one was near at the time, it being very early in the morning. As he did not return people went down to the canal to look for him, and found his clothes on the bank. A large crowd collected, but nothing was done till early in the afternoon. The officials had been informed of the accident, but no doubt more pressing business detained them, and in any case they had to come from some distance. I went down and mixed with the crowd. The man's wife, mother, and little son were standing close to the water's edge, accompanied by numbers of sympathizers. The women were gesticulating and wailing, as they always do after a death, and were waving the blue and black handkerchiefs used on such occasions. "O my father! O camel of the house!"[1] they cried. A boat was manned by two or three men with a line, to which large fishing-hooks were attached, by means of which they hoped to hook up the body. They had been searching one portion of the canal in this way for some time, with no result, when I suggested that they should try another part, in the direction of which the current was flowing. They followed my advice, and very soon found the body. It was placed on the shore and immediately surrounded by a large crowd, which, after some time, dispersed, and then I saw the mother and wife of the dead man, one seated at the head and the other at the feet. I was strongly reminded of the ancient representations of Isis and Nephthys bewailing the dead Osiris. After this accident I was told by some of the villagers that no woman would go alone to fill her water-jar at that spot for fear of the drowned man's *'afrīt*, which would always remain in the water. It might be a good *'afrīt*, and then it would do no injury; but—who could tell?—it might be bad!

A few years ago some women in a neighbouring village had gone

[1] The camel, being a beast of burden and a means of livelihood among the peasants, typifies the breadwinner of the family.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

ʿAFĀRIT

A few years ago some women in a neighboring village had gone to the Gizeh canal to fill their water-jars. One of them, thinking it would be pleasant to have a bathe, for the weather was very hot, took off her clothes and went right into the water, dancing about with her water-jar on her head. Suddenly she cried out and started wailing, as she felt that she was being drawn under the water. No one made any effort to save her, as they said that an *ʿafrīt* of some drowned person had caught her by her hair and was dragging her down. They believed that if one of them attempted to save her he or she would probably be caught also—and, besides, the *ʿafrīt* wanted her and must have her!

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2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XV

MUSLIM SHEIKHS AND COPTIC SAINTS

THE Egyptian peasants venerate a number of holy men and women to whom miraculous powers have been ascribed, either during their lifetime or after their death Such a holy person is given the title of sheikh. The word sheikh means literally an old man, and a man who is advanced in years is often addressed as Sheikh so and so as a term of respect. The word also signifies the head of an Arab tribe, the leading man in a village, and, finally, a learned man (*i.e.*, one learned in the sacred writings).

Certain of these holy men and women are venerated all over the country, the cults connected with them having become part of the general popular religion. But, besides these greater personages, there are innumerable local saints, who, however, often draw their devotees from localities beyond the boundaries of their villages.

However great may be the veneration paid to a saint in his lifetime, the honour he receives after his death is far greater. Among the Muslims it is the custom to erect over the grave of such a person a small whitewashed building, crowned with a dome, the outer and inner walls being usually decorated with line-drawings in colours and with inscriptions consisting of passages from the Ḳorān (see Figs. 139, 140). In many cases it is customary to provide a 'servant' (Fig. 138), or sometimes a number of 'servants,' whose salary is paid out of an endowment in land or money, augmented by the donations of those who visit the tomb. This man, or it may be a woman, is known as "the servant of the sheikh," and the office may descend from father to son. Besides the land surrounding the tomb, the sacred precincts may include a well, the water of which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous properties.

Sometimes a stone, or a heap of stones, or a tree or clump of trees, alone mark the last resting-place of a departed sheikh, but when there is a domed tomb a tree or trees are usually associated

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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with it. However, a tomb is not usually built until the dead sheikh appears to some one and demands such a building.

Most Muslim sheikhs of any standing have two or more tombs, or other burial sites, associated with them. This does not mean that the body of the sheikh is actually buried in any one of these sites, though there are many cases where this is so. A dead sheikh may appear to some man in a dream, or even when he is awake, and tell him to build a tomb on such and such a spot, and may even personally conduct him thither. It may happen that the inhabitants of a village possessing a venerated sheikh have been guilty of misconduct, or have offended the holy man by neglecting to pay him the respect which he considers his due. In such a case, it is believed, the sheikh will appear to a man in a distant village and instruct him to build another tomb. The new tomb often becomes more popular and is visited by a larger number of people than the older building. Thus a sheikh whose original tomb is in Lower Egypt may also be associated with a tomb or tombs far south in Upper Egypt.

FIG. 138. THE 'SERVANT' OF THE SHEIKH SAYID

Candles, or money with which to buy them, form a favourite offering. Such lights are kept burning every night in some sheikhs' tombs; in others they are perhaps burned on one night only in the week, usually a Friday. A number of votive offerings are generally found hanging on a cord or cords stretched across the interior of the building. The gifts display great variety, including glass

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and bead bracelets, bunches of human hair, handkerchiefs, first-fruits of the cornfields, and so on. Each one registers an answered prayer, for the people flock in crowds to these tombs on certain days of the week—usually Thursdays or Fridays—generally to make some special request, or with the object of being freed from some disease, which they believe the sheikh can cure. A childless woman, or persons possessed by *ʿafārīt*, will come to beg the sheikh to intercede for them. Indeed, the performances of certain rites at the tomb may in themselves effect a cure.

Having removed his or her shoes before entering the building, the visitor then walks from left to right round the catafalque erected beneath the dome three, five, or seven times, reciting meanwhile special passages from the Ḳorān. These perambulations accomplished, the servant of the sheikh takes a broom, kept for this special purpose, and carefully brushes out all the footprints in the interior of the building.

Sick animals are also brought by their owners to a sheikh's tomb, round which they are driven seven times.

In one of the provinces of Upper Egypt, on the lower desert, stands the domed tomb of the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli (Fig. 139). It is surrounded by a low mud-brick wall, which encloses a few small trees, a well, and two or three graves, wherein relatives of the dead sheikh lie buried. Pots of *ṣabr* (aloes) also decorate the sacred spot, for this plant is believed to bring happiness to the dead. The building is whitewashed, and is decorated with line-drawings in red and blue, illustrating the pilgrimage to Mecca. The surrounding desert is covered with the graves of more ordinary folk. These are marked by heaps of sand, into which are stuck branches of palm-trees, for palm-branches, like the aloe-plants, are believed to be the means of conveying happiness to the dead who lie beneath.

The sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli was only eighteen years old when he died, but from his earliest years he was noted for his piety. He was educated at a small school in his native village, and, as soon as he had learned to read, he spent all his leisure moments studying the Ḳorān. When he died he was buried in an ordinary grave in the lower desert among his dead fellow-villagers. However, one day, when old ʿAli (his father) was squatting on a *maṣṭabeh* (see p. 32), with his head resting on his hand, his dead son appeared before him and caught hold of him by the wrist, saying, " I am very angry."

His father said, " Why are you angry, my son ? "

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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The boy replied, " Because you have not built me a large tomb, and if you do not do so now I will go away to another village."

" O my beloved son," said his father, " to-morrow morning I will begin to build a fine tomb for you."

Young ʿAli held a paper in his hand, and he now presented this to his father, telling him that on it were written full directions for the building of the tomb, together with a specification of the exact

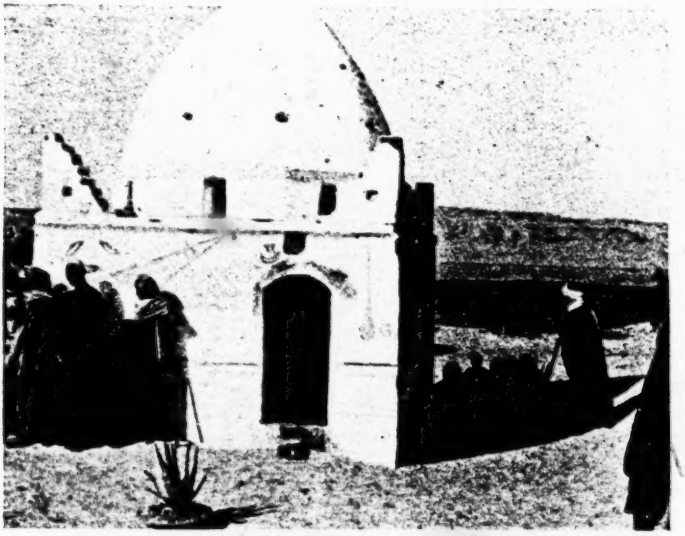

FIG. 139. DOMED TOMB OF THE SHEIKH ḤASAN ʿALI

spot where it was to be built and also as to where would be found a well of water, the locality of which was hitherto unknown.

The tomb was built with all speed, the workmen following the instructions written on the paper presented to old ʿAli by his son. A well was sunk on the spot indicated, and the water from it is excellent. The father states most emphatically that he was wide awake when his son appeared to him. When I questioned old ʿAli as to what he had done with the paper he told me that it had been lost by the workmen !

A small model of a boat is hung up in the sheikh Ḥasan ʿAli's tomb, as in the tombs of many sheikhs, the boat being called the sheikh's ferry-boat.

The mother of this sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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to climb down and join the festive crowds he found that he could not move, and that, when he tried to do so, his limbs were rigid and his whole body paralysed. On seeing the plight of the wretched man cries to the sheikh were immediately raised. People came with drums and tambourines, others sang and clapped their hands in rhythmic accompaniment to the music, till at last, after about two hours of such intercession, the man regained his power of locomotion, and so was able to move away.

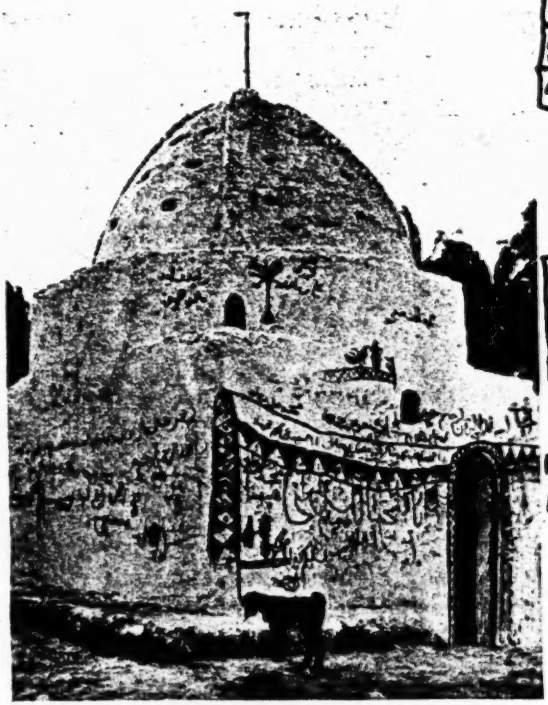

FIG. 140. TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBÂRAK
The external mural decorations are to be noted.

Some time after this exhibition of his power the sheikh ʿAbdu 'l-Laṭīf appeared to a man in a village a few miles distant, telling him to build him a tomb there. The people of this village went in triumph to the sheikh's native place and exultantly told the inhabitants that their sheikh had now come to them.

The original tomb still exists, but it is in a very dilapidated state, and no doubt in course of time it will wholly disappear, unless something happens to revive the veneration formerly paid to the holy man in his native village. Meanwhile, the people of the village where ʿAbdu 'l-Laṭīf's later resting-place is built hold a *mūlid* every year in honour of their acquired sheikh.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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formed him that one of his sons had stolen it and had sold it to a man in another village in the same province. She then told him the name of the man who had bought it, and said that if he went to the house of the purchaser he would be able to recover his lost property.

I was told that this information proved to be true, and the man eventually got back the camel which he had lost.

Another man then came forward, and when he had presented the sheikheh with a small sum of money she told him his name and the name of his village, though he was quite unknown to her. She also informed him that he had three sons and one daughter—a perfectly correct statement—and said, moreover, that on his return home he would find that his daughter was ill, this information also proving to be true.

This woman died two or three years ago, and crowds flocked to her funeral, men of all ranks coming to do her honour.

A certain Sheikh Ṣabr is buried in a small village in Middle Egypt, and a tree only marked his resting-place. This tree, which was large and very old, was blown down in 1926. I inquired if a tomb would now be built over the grave, but I was informed that probably no such building would be erected until the sheikh had appeared to some one and commanded him to build for him a domed tomb. I had visited this village on several occasions before the disaster occurred to the sacred tree, and was fortunate enough to secure some good photographs of it. The tree stood at the end of the village, and devotees who came to beg the sheikh to intercede for them so that they might obtain some special benefit, or who wished to be cured of headache or other ailments, would knock a nail into the trunk and then usually twist some of their hair round the nail. A cure, so it was believed, would follow this act. The nails must be virgin-nails—*i.e.*, not used before—and must be of native manufacture. Childless women also visited the tree to be cured of their barrenness. The sheikh Ṣabr is very highly venerated, and a *mūlid*, described on p. 256, is held in his honour once a year.

All these sheikhs were poor men, and the veneration shown to them is due to the virtues they displayed and to their supposed miraculous powers. The high esteem in which they hold their local saints is really good for the peasants, as it sets them some standard of conduct, and gives them a higher ideal of life than mere moneymaking and material success.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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festivities connected with the birth of a child took place in ancient Egypt, certainly during the Middle Kingdom, fourteen days after birth, a mother being accounted unclean until she had purified herself with a fourteen days' purification.[1]

FIG. 158. KHNUM MODELLING THE ROYAL CHILD AND ITS KA
After A. Gayet, *Le temple de Louxor*, Pl. LXIII.

I have stated on pp. 67, 99, 100 (see also p. 63) that a belief in reincarnation exists among the *fellāḥīn*. It seems also to have existed among the ancient Egyptians, anyhow in the late New Kingdom, judging from certain episodes in the *Tale of the Two Brothers*.[2]

The statements on pp. 69 ff. about the *ḳarīn* and *ḳarīneh* recall the ancient Egyptian belief about the *ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarīn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the reliefs in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri[3] depicting the god Khnum modelling

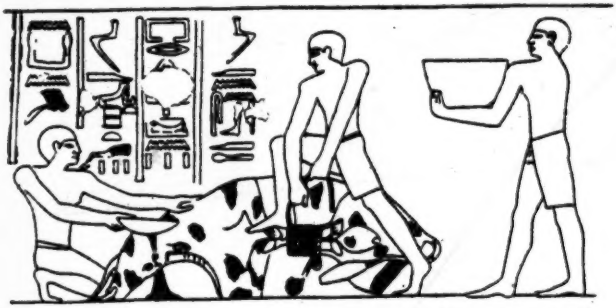

FIG. 159. MAN HOLDING A BASIN AT THE SLAUGHTER OF A VICTIM
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I, Pl. XI.

the royal child and its *ka* (see Fig. 158) and their simultaneous birth.

In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in

[1] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] A. Erman, *ibid.*, pp. 158 ff.; see also Herodotus, ii, 123; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 32.
[3] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 165.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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In modern Egypt a child is suckled for two years (p. 81); in ancient Egypt, according to the passage in the *Wisdom of Anii* quoted on p. 283, it was not weaned till it was three years old.

On p. 82, in describing the slaughter of a victim at a festival held on behalf of a child, I stated that the animal was placed on its back and its throat cut, and that a quantity of the blood was preserved in a bowl. Victims were slain exactly in this manner at ancient Egyptian festivals. In almost every decorated tombs chapel they are depicted extended on their backs with the butchers cutting their throats. Occasionally in these scenes an assistant is

FIG. 160. ANCIENT HARPER AND VOCALIST
After A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part II, Pl. III.

shown holding a large bowl,[1] evidently to catch the blood (Fig. 159). Did the practice of smearing the door with blood exist in Egypt as far back as the Old Kingdom? The blood was evidently required for some ceremonial purpose, otherwise what need would there have been for the basin?

To sing or recite with one hand laid against a side of the face and the other hand extended (p. 82) is a very ancient practice (Fig. 160), and so, too, is the throwing of one's clothes about as a sign of admiration and rejoicing (p. 83). Thus in one of the *Pyramid Texts*,[2] dating from about 2600 B.C., we read how the dead king, having reached the celestial realm of the sun-god,

[1] A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, Part I (London, 1914), Pl. XI; *cf.* also Part IV (London, 1924), p. 27; P. Montet, *Les scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'ancien empire* (Strassburg, 1925), p. 165.

[2] K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, Spruch 518.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
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[113]

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

"found the gods waiting, wrapped in their garments, their white sandals on their feet. Then cast they their sandals to the ground, then threw they off their garments. 'Our heart was not glad until thou camest,' said they."

The custom of shaving, in performance of a vow, a boy's head save for a number of tufts, which are dedicated to one or more Muslim or Coptic saints, and of ceremonially cutting off the tufts when they have grown to a certain length (pp. 84 ff.), is evidently very ancient. Clay balls containing infantile hair, such as are

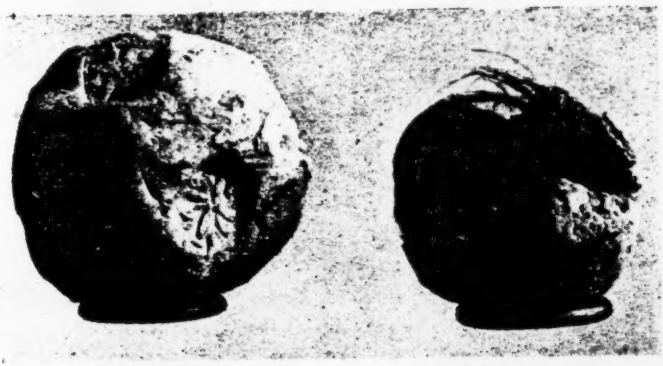

FIG. 161. ANCIENT CLAY BALLS FROM EL-'AMARNEH, ONE BROKEN AND SHOWING INFANTILE HAIR INSIDE

described on p. 86, have been found both at el-'Amarneh (Fig. 161) and in a Twentieth-Dynasty tomb at el-Lāhūn.[1] Herodotus[2] seems to be referring to this or some very similar custom when he says:

> All the inhabitants of the cities perform their vows to the keepers [of the sacred animals] in the following manner. Having made a vow to the god to whom the animal belongs, they shave either the whole heads of their children, or a half, or a third of the head, and then weigh the hair in a scale against silver, and whatever the weight may be, they give to the keeper of the animals; and she in return cuts up some fish, and gives it as food to the animals. Such is the usual mode of feeding them.

Circumcision (pp. 87 f.) seems to have been practised universally in ancient times (as it is in modern Egypt) until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when it was restricted to candidates for the

[1] W. S. Blackman, *Man*, vol. xxv, pp. 65 ff.
[2] ii, 65.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

the funeral procession of a Nineteenth-Dynasty priest named Kynebu in his tomb-chapel at Sheikh 'Abd-el-Ḳurneh.[1] The custom of slaughtering an animal at the graveside on the occasion of a funeral (p. 110) is, of course, exceedingly ancient, and is referred to in the *Story of Sinuhe*: "slaughtering is made at the door of thy façade-stela."[2] Was the false door, one wonders, sprinkled with the victim's blood?

With the statement on pp. 113 f.,[3] that on returning from the funeral "the men seat themselves outside the doorway, where they are joined by friends," is to be compared a passage in a letter written to his dead wife by an official of the late New Kingdom: "I bewailed thee exceedingly along with my household in front of my dwelling."[4]

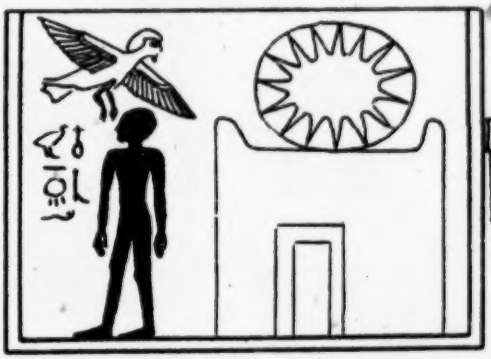

FIG. 165. SHADOW AND BAI OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF A TOMB
After E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i, Pl. CIV.

The rectangular brick superstructure of a modern grave, with its vaulted roof and door-like recess at one end (p. 116), closely resembles the superstructure of the ordinary middle-class grave of all periods (see, for example, Fig. 164).[5] Ancient examples of the large burial chamber with vaulted roof described on p. 116 are also to be found.[6]

The idea that a man's shadow is a separate entity (p. 113) also prevailed in ancient Egypt. A vignette in an Eighteenth-Dynasty copy of *The Book of the Dead* depicts a man's shadow

[1] J. G. Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), vol. iii, Pl. LXIX.
[2] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 24; A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. x, p. 199.
[3] *Cf.* also pp. 121 f.
[4] A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 25.
[5] *E.g.*, W. M. F. Petrie, *Tarkhan* (London, 1914). Part II, Pl. XV; D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *Buhen* (Philadelphia, 1911), Pls 77–82.
[6] D. Randall-MacIver and C. L. Woolley, *op. cit.*, Pl. 84; H. Schaefer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients*, p. 266, Fig. 2.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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and his *bai* (soul, or manifestation [1]) outside the door of his tomb [2] (Fig. 165).

The weekly visit to the cemetery, the *ʕala'*, described on pp. 117 ff., and the performances there during the Muslim festivals of *el-'Îd eṣ-Ṣughaiyar* and *el-'Îd el-Kibîr* (pp. 259 ff.), and on the Coptic festival of *Yôm el-Ghiṭâs*, are all undoubtedly survivals from the past. From the earliest times it was the custom to honour the memory of the dead at certain definite periods by celebrating the funerary liturgy in the tomb-chapel or at the graveside. This liturgy consisted mainly in presenting the deceased with numerous articles of food and drink, which at an early date acquired a mystical significance. But through the whole of Egyptian history the idea persisted that the dead must somehow or other be adequately supplied with food. The name given to this ancient rite was *prt*, meaning 'the coming forth' or 'going up,' and the word *ʕala'* means exactly the same. From the same root is derived *ʕulū'*, used in the combination *ʕulū' esh-shems*, 'sunrise.' *Prt* has also this meaning in Egyptian. Both the Egyptian *pry* and the Arabic *ʕala'* are the ordinary verbs used, with the meaning 'to rise,' of the sun.

In ancient Egyptian *prt* (Arabic *ʕala'*), in its technical sense of 'ascent,' 'going up to,' or 'procession to' the necropolis, nearly always appears in the combination *prt-r-ḫrw*, a 'coming forth,' or a 'going up at the voice'—*i.e.*, with offerings to the cemetery, the 'voice' being originally that of the living king (Horus),[3] bidding the offerers draw nigh to the grave of his predecessor, the dead king (Osiris). Later, of course, the 'voice' was the voice of the funerary priest who replaced the king, Horus, at the funerals of his subjects, or who acted as the king's deputy at the royal tombs.

In the tomb-chapel of Methen, who lived at the end of the Third Dynasty, the following formula occurs:

> Grace granted by Anubis who presides in the necropolis, a coming-forth-unto-the-voice there by all his [*i.e.*, the deceased Methen's] villages [that formed his funerary endowment] on the *wag*-festival, . . . the first day of the month, the first day of the half-month, the first day of every week.[4]

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[1] A. H. Gardiner, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. xxxvii, p. 258.

[2] E. Naville, *Das aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII bis XX Dynastie*, vol. i (Berlin, 1886), Pl. CIV; S. Birch, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vol. viii, pp. 386 ff.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, p. 85.

[4] A. M. Blackman, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. iii, p. 32.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ancient Egypt MR5
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In view of the evidence obtained from the meaning of the names given to both the ancient and the modern rite, together with many similarities in the funerary ritual of the ancient and modern Egyptians, as well as the interesting fact that 'the going up' was in both instances to the desert, we have distinct justification for supposing that the modern ceremonies are in origin pre-Christian and pre-Islamic, and are direct ritualistic survivals from the earliest period of Egyptian history. One realizes this all the more fully when one reads Professor Breasted's or Dr Reisner's vivid account of the observances in the cemetery at Asyūṭ during an annual festival in the time of the Middle Kingdom.[1] In the modern as in the ancient festivals quantities of loaves of bread are brought to the tomb, incense is burned (see p. 266), and victims are slain (p. 260). The burning of incense was, of course, a most important and prominent feature of the ancient funerary ceremonial, and the dead were supposed to take a special delight in smelling it,[2] and also to derive benefit therefrom.[3]

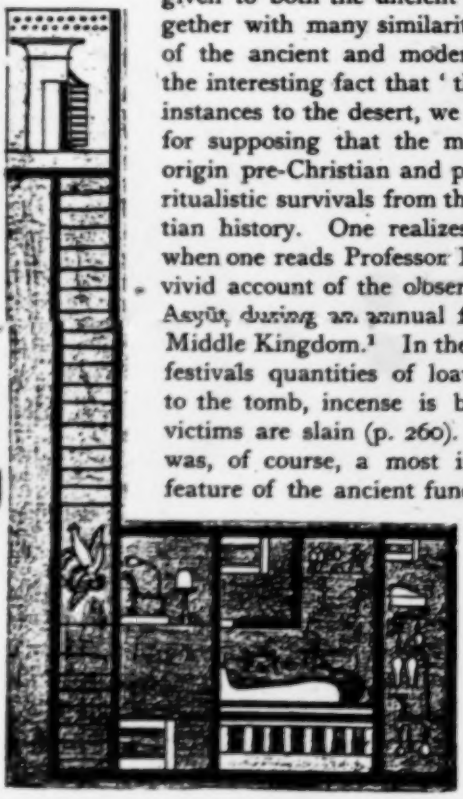

FIG. 166. THE SOUL DESCENDING THE BURIAL-SHAFT
After G. Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization* (London, 1894), p. 198.

The modern conception that the soul visits the body on the day of the *Ṭala'* (pp. 117, 120) finds an excellent parallel in a well-known vignette in *The Book of the Dead* depicting the soul (*bai*) in the form of a bird, descending the shaft admit-

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1912), pp. 259 ff.; G. A. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, p. 92. Dr Reisner, speaking of the jars of beer, loaves of bread, and the roast meat presented to Djefaihap's statue on the great New Year's festival, says: "All these offerings were, of course, distributed to the poor or to such scribes as came to repeat the offering formula before the statue. In modern practice, the scribe reads or recites a chapter from the Korân, repeating it over and over according to what he receives."

[2] See, *e.g.*, A. M. Blackman, *Rock Tombs of Meir* (London, 1924), Part IV, p. 22.

[3] A. M. Blackman, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. l, pp. 69 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ting to the burial-chamber in order to unite with the mummy which rests there (Fig. 166). The idea that the dead resided

FIG. 167. WIDOW BEWAILING HER DEAD HUSBAND
After W. Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, Pl. 417.

in their tombs as well as in the realm of Osiris or in heaven with the sun-god is to be found in Egyptian religious texts of all periods.[1]

An ancient painting (Fig. 167) depicting a widow bewailing her husband at one of her weekly or less frequent periodical visits

FIG. 168. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *Recherches sur les arts et les métiers* (Paris, 1831), Pl. 16.[2]

FIG. 169. ANCIENT POTTERS
After F. Cailliaud, *ibid.*[2]

to his tomb may be compared with one of my photographs (Fig. 150) of a modern widow similarly engaged.

[1] *E.g.*, A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (London, 1907), pp. 106 ff.; see, too, F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests*, pp. 15, 38.
[2] See also P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, Part II, Pl. 7.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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or other amulets hung round the neck.[1] The collection of charms used by mothers to protect or cure their infants, referred to in note 1 below under the title of *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (*Spells for Mother and Child*), dates probably from the Hyksōs period (1788–1580 B.C.); it is preserved in the Berlin Museum. The object of one of the charms in this ancient collection[2] was to protect a child from a spirit of the female sex (possibly, according to Professor Erman, a dead woman), which was trying to take it from its mother. With this idea may be compared, perhaps, the modern one that a child's falling ill is due to the mother's *ḳarīneh* wishing to draw it away from her (p. 72). The spell in question reads as follows:

FIG. 186. IRON SICKLE OF ROMAN PERIOD
After *A Guide to the Third and Fourth Egyptian Rooms in the British Museum* (London, 1904), p. 41.

> Run out, thou [fem.] that comest in the darkness, that slinkest [?] in with nose behind thee and face averted, that failest in that for which thou hast come.
>
> Hast thou come to kiss this child? I will not suffer thee to kiss him.
>
> Hast thou come to kill him? I will not suffer thee to kill him.
>
> Hast thou come to harm him? I will not suffer thee to harm him.
>
> Hast thou come to take him away? I will not suffer thee to take him from me.
>
> I have made his protection against thee with *ʃȝy*-herbs which make . . . [?], with onions which harm thee, with honey which is sweet for mankind and bitter for the dead, with the . . . [?] of the *ỉbdw*-fish, with the jaw-bone of the . . . [?], with the back of the perch.

My accounts of the eye-specialists on pp. 201 ff. and 211 f. may be compared with Herodotus' statement on the subject of Egyptian medicine[3]: "Each physician treats a single disorder, and no more. All places abound in physicians; some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head. . . ."

The professions of magician and physician were no less closely

[1] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 408; A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 30, 32, 35, etc., and *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 218 and note 6.
[2] A. Erman, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind*, pp. 11 f.
[3] ii, 84.

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

with which she completely covered herself. Presently she clapped her hands two or three times, thus summoning "the brothers and sisters beneath the earth," *i.e.* the *'afārīt*. They spoke to her, and after various messages from them had been conveyed to us through the magician, my friend's wife asked her to enquire what had become of her husband's *ḳarîn*. "Oh," replied the *'afārīt*, "he is dead also, and your *ḳarînch* is a widow." The magician was something of a ventriloquist, and her voice changed completely when the *'afārīt* spoke through her.

As I have stated above, the *aḥrāṉ*, besides being like their human prototypes in colouring and physical features, also resemble them in character. The Egyptians are of a very jealous disposition, and this quality is strongly marked among the women with regard to the possession of children. Childlessness is a real terror to them, and the more children they have, the happier they are. Such, at any rate, is the case among the *fellāḥīn*. They are often very jealous of the offspring of another, and therefore precautions are taken to protect the children from the ill-effects of the "evil-eye," or "eye of envy."

A woman's *ḳarînch* may also be jealous of the human children, in spite of the fact that if a child is born to a woman the *ḳarîn* or *ḳarînch* of that child represents the offspring of the mother's *ḳarînch*. Various measures are taken to safeguard the human child from the possible machinations of its mother's "double." Indeed, the mother herself, during her pregnancy, must also be protected, for her *ḳarînch*, in a fit of jealousy, may come at night while she sleeps and strike her "on the belly," thus causing premature birth. This is curious, as, presumably, the mother's *ḳarînch* would also lose her child. But, at any rate in some parts of Egypt, the belief is that when a child dies it goes to the mother's *ḳarînch*, who would in this way possess at least one child, even if her own child (*i.e.* the human child's "double") died at the same time as its human prototype.

Sometimes the *ḳarînch* speaks roughly to the expectant mother, but refrains from striking her. In such a case the woman will go at daybreak to see a magician or a *sheikh* and will ask him to write a protection (*ḥigāb*) for her. The protection (or written charm) is the agreement of the *ḳarînchs* with King David—for it happened one day that David saw one of them unfasten her hair, and fire was issuing from her mouth. So he asked her, "What is your work?" She answered him, "If a woman is pregnant, I come by night and strike her on her belly, so that she will give birth to a dead child. And if I do not do this, but allow her to bear the child safely, I may sometimes come and strike the baby, or cause a snake to bite or a scorpion to sting it, so that it will die." Then David said to her, "If this is your work I will kill you," and he spoke threateningly to her. So she made an agreement with him and said, "If a mother carries your words on her person I will never do her harm." So David consented to this suggestion and let her go on her way. Therefore, if a pregnant woman thinks she has cause to fear that her *ḳarînch* will do her an injury, she will apply for a *ḥigāb* and wear it till her child is born, when she will give it to the infant,

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

woman friend, will sometimes carry the child early in the morning to a *zirîbch* made of *bûs* (dried *dura* stalks) in which the sheep are kept in the field at night. She also takes a knife with her, and, entering the *zirîbch*, will hand the child over to the shepherd. The shepherd, having placed the child on its back on the ground, will take the knife which the woman brought with her and will place the blunt edge against the child's throat and pretend to cut it. The child will then start crying, upon which the man will remove the knife and return the child to the woman who brought it. It is believed that good angels watch over the sheep, as they are looked upon as gentle animals, and that these angels, on hearing the child cry, will drive away its mother's *karînch* who has caused the illness by clutching at the child's throat. According to my informant, this belief is common all over Egypt.

I could quote many instances of illness caused to children by their mother's *karînch* during this dangerous period of seven years.

That a woman's *karînch* may sometimes perform a kindly action is shown in the following belief. One of the many devices resorted to by a woman whose child has died and who has failed to produce further offspring is as follows. The would-be mother will lie down between the lines on a railway track, remaining in this position while the train passes over her. One of the reasons given for this practice is that when a mother is thus frightened her *karînch* will come to her with the soul of her dead child and cause it to re-enter the mother. This implies a belief in reincarnation, and I have obtained further information which points to a definite belief in rebirth. For an ancient example of belief in reincarnation reference may be made to the well-known Tale of the Two Brothers.[1]

The following is a translation of the written charm worn by an expectant mother who has reason to fear harm being done to her offspring by her *karînch*. The charm is obviously Coptic, but it is used by Muslim mothers as well as those professing Christianity: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for He is a great Lord who created the seen and the unseen things; He whom we cannot see with our eyes, and with whom no evil will dwell; who also knoweth well all things that will happen in the future; to whom all the angels cry, saying 'Hallowed be Thy Name'; from whom all evils fly away; who is praised by all things in the Heaven and all the earth, for He is a mighty Lord. Oh, mighty God, I ask Thee to protect N.N., who is carrying my protection, and protect what is in her womb, and him whom she will nurse with her milk, from the evil *karînch*, for the sake of Thy mighty ring (*i.e.* the charm square)."

The probable meaning of the square is, so I was told, "Go on Gabriel, go on Michael, go on Raphael, go on Suriyal, go on Maniyal, for the sake of our Mighty God, and burn this *karînch* in the fire." These are said to be the words of King David. (Pl. XIV, Fig. 3.)

[1] Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, ii, pp. 16 ff.

[See category 116, plate facing P. 168 -- Analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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764 coffin, would be crushed by the clods of earth heaped over it. This excavation serves only as the entrance to a roomy earthen vault, hollowed out alongside of it, in which the body is placed, and is thus protected as well as if in a coffin. The entrance to the lateral vault is then built up with bricks, and during this lengthy operation the people standing around
[533] sing the melodious song "God pardon the Mohammedan men and Mohammedan women, the believing men and believing women" (*allahu maghfir el moslimin u el moslimat u el mumenin u el mumenat*). One of the scribes, an imam, a
• 775 schoolmaster, or the corpse-washer, delivers himself of a short
764 stereotyped funeral discourse, in which the deceased—who is no doubt straining his ears to listen—is instructed as to what he is to answer at the examination he will have to undergo in the coming night. Once more the confession of the Mohammedan faith is impressed upon him. For there come to
[776] test him two angels of horrid aspect, Nakir and Munkir by name, and torment him soul and body if he does not stand on the firm basis of Islam. Lastly, those present whisper
764 the *fatha*, and amid loud invocations to the gracious and all-merciful One, clod after clod is flung by them into the grave. The male members of the family who act as mourners place themselves in a row, receive the consolatory words and handshaking of the people who have come along with them, and every one hastens to the place whence he has come.

765 In the night we hear behind the walls of the house of mourning the shrieking of women, now wound off in the trochees of a machine in action, anon in the dactyls of the steam-horse thundering along at full speed, or breaking up into the indefinite clack of a mill. Briskly is the kettle-drum beaten, and high up, from time to time, like a rocket, rises a shriek from a hundred throats. The earth gives out a hollow sound from the stamping of the feet of the filth-besmeared women. It sounds like an ungovernable outburst
[535] of joy and revelry; it is the corpse dance, through which the
[154] wife gives vent to her stormy grief.

The men, however, pass the "night of loneliness" with their friends and neighbours before the house or in a neigh-